

Introductory presentation of ICIL 2011

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Welcome to the 4th international conference on Information law and ethics 2011 – it is a honor to host you and thank you for joining us in this academic endeavor. As you may perhaps know, ICIL is a yearly event organized by the Department of Archive and Library sciences of the Ionian University; it started as an activity of the Postgraduate Program in Corfu, Science of Information in 2008. This is a photo of this first conference, “The changing facets of Information in Information Law”; we were honored to receive, amongst other very important academics in the field, Professors John Palfrey and Urs Gasser from Harvard Law School and Professor Simon Rogerson from the DeMontfort University, who is also a speaker today.

In 2009, we continued with an international event which took place jointly with CEPE, the 8th International Conference Computer Ethics: Philosophical Enquiry 2009, a conference the Department of Archive and Library Sciences co-organized with the Department of Informatics of the Ionian University. CEPE conferences are sponsored by INSEIT, the International Society for Ethics and Information Technology. INSEIT gladly agreed to also sponsor the ICIL series, starting with the year of 2009, “A World for Information Law”. In 2010, with “An information Law for the 21st Century”, ICIL accepted more than 35 papers and presentations; our keynote speakers were President Commissioner Oscar Guerra Mauricio Ford, from Mexico, head of the Institute for Access to Information for the Federal District, Professor Lambros Kotsiris from the Thessaloniki Law School, an esteemed member of the Greek Academy and Dr Konstantinos Karachalios, from the European Patent Office. This was the first year we added a forum for young scholars, the Young Scholars’ Forum, as we felt there was a need to include younger scholars in the game of academia-PhD candidates had a chance to present their work. We did not know then that the YSF would within a year become so much bigger-attracting scholars from everywhere, working of the subject of information law and ethics.

Coming to the sensitive matter of the field of information law, I need to stress that the aspect of ICIL is wide-very wide, indeed. It covers every legal aspect of dealing with information, production, transfer, access, ownership, use and management of information. Information as a concept is also seen generally as anything that reduces uncertainty for the recipient. I wouldn’t dare, however, try and define information in any certain way. Academic, but also legal bibliography is full with so many different definitions for information that this task would prove itself impossible. In a little country like Greece, I have every reason to believe that within the handful of academic who would care about this question, people definitely disagree. Anyway, for ICIL, information law is a very wide field; you can see in the very diverse topics of our papers presentation an example of how wide this can actually be. Coming to information ethics, and being very grateful to Professor

Rafael Capurro who came to Corfu in 2009 to teach us about information ethics, I came to believe that information law and information ethics constitute an unseparable unit of an academic domain. Researching information law and not information ethics, at least as “basics”, I think is wrong; it deducts from the discussion the philosophical foundation without which the strictly legal ‘conversation’ turns out almost unimportant. Because law may give you tools to resolve some questions in practice, the method to adjudicate a dispute and to give an award to this or the other party-yes, this is true, but ethics is the reason you ever reach to articulate the question itself. This said, ICIL covers both information law and ethics and actively seeks academics and scholars in both connected fields.

Even wider than this, we noted in the sites both last year and this year, that we are interested in research papers coming from other disciplines in connection to information-sociology, psychology, criminology, history as related to information. Before you start thinking “wait a minute”, let me add this: for one, law has never been seen as unconnected to other sciences: its connection to criminology is self-evident, but we know law is connected to sociology (hence, sociology of law etc), to psychology (hence, courses of psychology and the law) and to history. So we care about papers for example on why students engage in IP piracy so easily (a question touching upon juvenile delinquency of criminology and psychology). My entirely personal wish is to accept some papers on the history of intellectual property; I adore history of copyright and have seen that exploring the historical roots of the laws greatly enlightens the understanding of the current state of these laws.

In addition, however, to this well-known bond of the law and other disciplines, philosophy and technology also seem to dictate that we do not dare “see” information as a concept enclosed within a particular scientific domain. Information penetrates-or even, is- everything around us and we should see it as such. I think that if we could understand modern physics of information, for example (I most certainly cannot), we would be far better as information law scholars. So this is the dimension we wanted to give to this conference-the fundamental idea we aimed at passing. And this is what we launched with the new session on museum ethics-that museum ethics belongs to information ethics, as a museum collectible is, in substance, an information-sending “organism”. Probably knowledgeable people saw the great influence here of Professor Luciano Floridi of Oxford-our next year’s keynote (Professor Herman Tavani is our next year’s keynote as well). I thank Dr George Papaioannou, a Lecturer of our Department for his help in organizing this session and of course, Professor Tesi Sali for her endorsement.

And this, bring us to this 4th international conference. Let me tell you what we have changed and how we moved on. We changed venue, wishing to attract more interested people who would come easier to a big city like Thessaloniki (in this we had also some nagging from people who, like me, adore the wonderful island of Corfu, and never ever minded coming every year at this little paradise). We also reached out for collaboration from other Departments of Universities; and we were very happy to collaborate with the University of Macedonia, Department of Applied Informatics, with Professor Tzeni Alexandropoulou, a co-chair of this conference, thank you Tzeni, and the Aristoteleian University, Department of Law. We also asked for sponsoring, except INSEIT, the Institute of Legal Informatics of

Germany (thank you Professor Forgo, for also sending us a fan of ICIL, joining for a 3rd time, Marcelo Corrales-IRI also sponsored ISIL 2010), the Italian NEXA and the International Center for Information Ethics (thank you Professor Rafael Capurro, for sending us Professor Karsten Weber, as a ICIL representative). So it is obvious that we are open, always open, to collaborations, national-as co-organizers-or international, such as the above. Let me express our gratitude for this invaluable moral support. Organizations who may wish to help us out in future years, please contact us. We need to thank, from our hearts, Dr Andreas Giannakouloupoulos and Roubini Economidou who had the responsibility for the site, the conference would not have happened without their help, and all the members of the executive organizing committee of the conference and of course, Mariet Vaina, head of public relations of the University of Macedonia and her expert team. Thank you all.

Participation in ICIL 2011 greatly surpassed expectations. We have more than 130 speakers, from all over the world-I do now dare think of the length of the book of proceedings. Last year's volume of proceedings exceeded 700 pages. This is our contribution to information law and ethics for the future-the series of papers, written and published for this conference. I want to ask all people to participate as much as they can, to ask questions, to offer guidance, to speak out their views for the sake of all the others. I thank you all from coming, old friends, new friends, future friends, colleagues and students, from Greece, from the UK, from Israel, from Russia, from everywhere, from the deepest of my heart.